



Department of Homeland Security Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report for 13 December 2005

Current
Nationwide
Threat Level is

ELEVATED
SIGNIFICANT RISK OF
TERRORIST ATTACKS

[For info click here](http://www.dhs.gov/)

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Daily Highlights

- FOX News reports a passenger who became agitated on a flight to Honolulu and allegedly charged toward the cockpit faces federal charges of interfering with a flight crew. (See item [7](#))
- United Press International reports the U.S. is stockpiling poultry vaccine to fight a possible bird flu outbreak, but is reluctant to use it for fear of hurting exports, since importing countries could not then tell whether chickens had been treated with a vaccine or infected with the disease. (See item [17](#))
- The National Center for Policy Analysis reports many American hospitals have poor infection control, in which case, any possible disease outbreak or bioterrorism would race through hospitals, infecting patients and staff. (See item [24](#))

DHS Daily Open Source Infrastructure Report *Fast Jump*

Production Industries: [Energy](#); [Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials](#); [Defense Industrial Base](#)

Service Industries: [Banking and Finance](#); [Transportation and Border Security](#); [Postal and Shipping](#)

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Energy Sector

Current Electricity Sector Threat Alert Levels: Physical: ELEVATED, Cyber: ELEVATED

Scale: LOW, GUARDED, ELEVATED, HIGH, SEVERE [Source: ISAC for the Electricity Sector (ES-ISAC) – <http://www.esisac.com>]

1. *December 12, Associated Press* — **Oil prices pass \$60 on OPEC decision.** Oil prices climbed above \$60 a barrel Monday, December 12, as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to maintain its present production levels amid anticipation that

energy demand would grow as colder weather grips the northeastern United States, the world's largest heating oil market. Explosions at an oil terminal north of London on Sunday also raised supply concerns, but authorities said the blasts will not lead to a shortage. Oil ministers from OPEC agreed Monday to keep oil spigots open and maintain production at the group's highest-ever levels — at least for now. The widely expected decision was reached at Monday's OPEC ministerial policy and production meeting and made public by Libyan Oil Minister Fathi Hamed Ben Shatwan. But the group reserved the right to consider cuts in early 2006 should robust demand flag and high prices fall. In recent weeks, oil prices have been dictated largely by weather patterns in the U.S. Northeast, which consumes about three-quarters of the country's heating oil. Spells of warmer weather have depressed prices, while forecasts for cold snaps have raised them.

Source: <http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.asp?feed=AP&Date=20051212&ID=4160093>

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Chemical Industry and Hazardous Materials Sector

2. *December 12, Associated Press* — **British oil-fire cloud spreads to France.** Firefighters used chemical foam to extinguish part of the inferno raging Monday, December 12, after explosions at a fuel depot north of London. The blasts Sunday, which injured 43 people, sent balls of fire into the sky and blew the doors off nearby houses, also contributed to a surge in oil prices to above \$60 Monday. The explosions came just four days after an al Qaeda videotape appeared on the Internet calling for attacks on facilities carrying oil that it claims has been stolen from Muslims in the Middle East, but police said they believed the blasts were accidental. Fire officials said they had put out blazes at half the 20 fuel tanks at the Buncefield depot 25 miles north of London, the fifth largest in Britain. A smoke cloud also drifted over northwestern France and was expected to reach Spain within 48 hours, France's national weather service said Monday. Most of the 2,000 people evacuated from their homes Sunday were still waiting to return. The depot, operated by French oil firm Total S.A. and part-owned by Texaco, stores 4.2 million gallons of gasoline, diesel, kerosene and aviation fuel.

Source: <http://www.breitbart.com/news/2005/12/12/D8EET9KO7.html>

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Defense Industrial Base Sector

Nothing to report.

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Banking and Finance Sector

3. *December 12, CNET News* — **Browsers to get sturdier padlocks.** The yellow security padlock in Web browsers, weakened by lax standards and loose supervision, will get reinforced next year with tougher requirements and browser updates. The browser icon was designed to show that traffic with a Website is encrypted and that a third party, called a certification authority,

has identified the site and vouches for its validity. But in recent years, standards of verification have slipped, undermining the sense of security implied by the padlock. To solve that problem, a group of companies that issue the Secure Socket Layer certificates are working with major Web browser makers to develop a new type of "high assurance" certificate. The informal organization, dubbed the CA Forum, has held three meetings this year and plans to meet again next year, representatives from the companies involved told CNET News. The tougher certificates, coupled with browser developments, could help fight "phishing," which threatens the multibillion-dollar online retail market. The issue has become more urgent with the advent of phishing scams, which use phony Websites to trick unsuspecting victims into giving up sensitive information. Some phishers have used valid certificates to give their fraudulent sites a sense of legitimacy with a padlock icon.

Source: http://news.com.com/Browsers+to+get+sturdier+padlocks/2100-1029_3-5989633.html?tag=nefd.lede

4. *December 12, Silicon.com* — **Police investigate UK charity hack.** Police at Scotland Yard's computer crime squad are investigating the hacking of a United Kingdom charity Website that has resulted in the theft of almost 3,000 credit card details. Hackers breached the security of the Aid to the Church in Need Website on Sunday, November 27, and stole the credit card details, names and addresses of 2,800 charity donors held on the system. The fraudsters have already used the stolen credit card details and have even telephoned some of the victims directly pretending to be from the charity and asking for money. Neville Kyrke-Smith, UK national director of Aid to the Church in Need, has already contacted over 2,800 charity donors identified as being at risk and said the Website will remain offline until the matter is resolved. Kyrke-Smith said he believes the charity was specifically targeted in the run-up to Christmas despite having a "professionally designed Website" with encryption and secure server access. Source: <http://news.zdnet.co.uk/0,39020330,39241442,00.htm>

5. *December 11, Charlotte Observer (NC)* — **Banks seek savings offshore.** The financial services sector is one of the more aggressive in offshore outsourcing. A new report predicts the industry will move more than 20 percent of its costs offshore by 2010, up from less than 10 percent in 2006. That could mean the shift of two million jobs to low-cost countries from the U.S., Europe, and Asia by 2010, according to consulting firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. Charlotte, NC's banks exemplify the ramp-up. Starting with technology work in 2002, Bank of America now has 1,500 employees in India, handling tasks from computer work to market research. The bank said it plans to grow there. Wachovia this summer began shipping programming to India and last month announced plans to start outsourcing to an Indian firm that does everything from bookkeeping to credit card processing. Not all banks are taking this step, but offshoring is on the rise. The Deloitte study found that a majority of 62 global institutions found offshoring "a competitive necessity." As much as 30 percent of a bank's functions does not directly touch customers, said Madhavi Mantha, a senior banking analyst with a financial consulting firm. The work moving overseas is becoming increasingly sophisticated, ranging from trade reconciliations to accounting functions to high-end investment bank number crunching. Source: <http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/business/industries/banking/13380859.htm>

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Transportation and Border Security Sector

6. *December 12, Chicago Tribune* — **Midway radios sounded warnings.** Radio communications recorded just before last week's fatal accident at Midway Airport reveal that some pilots and air-traffic controllers were concerned about the worsening snowstorm and discussed whether they could change the runway configuration to escape a tailwind that increased the stopping distance of planes landing. But the only possible runway switch at Midway would have caused an air-traffic logjam, curtailing the use of a major departure runway at O'Hare International Airport about 15 miles away, officials said. Midway flights were restricted to the one runway because city crews could not de-ice and plow other runways fast enough to keep up with the falling and blowing snow. Midway, surrounded by residential neighborhoods, can be a tricky airport for pilots. The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating why the Federal Aviation Administration, the Chicago Department of Aviation, and the airlines serving Midway did not implement a runway plan that would have boosted safety by putting a headwind against the noses of planes landing, investigators said. Air-traffic radio tapes show that at least several pilots Thursday night, December 8, asked if the option were available to land into a headwind to help slow aircraft instead of being buffeted by a 10-mph tailwind that buffeted the plane at an angle.

Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-0512120168dec12.1.5923234.story?coll=chi-news-hed>

7. *December 12, FOX News* — **Man allegedly charges cockpit, threatens baby on Honolulu flight.** A passenger who became agitated on a flight to Honolulu and allegedly charged toward the cockpit faces federal charges of interfering with a flight crew. Passengers and crewmembers overcame Santiago Lol Tizol during the flight from Los Angeles late Friday, December 9, and restrained him with plastic handcuffs after he threatened to harm another passenger's infant in the business class section. The 37-year-old citizen of Mexico was scheduled to appear in U.S. District Court in Honolulu on Monday, December 12. Interfering with a flight crew is a felony, and he could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

Source: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0.2933.178407.00.html>

8. *December 12, BBC (UK)* — **Man arrested in UK airport incident.** A 41-year-old man has been arrested after a "security alert" on an aircraft at Scotland's Inverness Airport, police said. The man was detained on the Easyjet plane, which was due to take off for Luton Airport in London, on Monday, December 12. About 120 passengers were on board the plane at the time of the incident. There were no injuries.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/4522730.stm

9. *December 12, Department of Transportation* — **Safety compliance agreement with Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad.** Track-caused train derailments resulting from inadequate track maintenance and inspection have led the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to enter into an agreement with the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, Inc. (CORP) to improve its compliance with Federal track safety standards. The safety compliance agreement with CORP, a subsidiary of Rail America of Boca Raton, FL, comes after a series of inspections conducted by FRA safety inspectors revealed ongoing failure to fully comply with federal track safety regulations. Specifically, the problems identified by FRA officials involve defective cross-ties, poor rail joint conditions, and wide gage where the rails have spread too far apart. Inspectors

also noted that the railroad has not adequately trained its track inspectors, nor provided sufficient managerial oversight to ensure proper compliance with federal track safety rules. The agreement requires the railroad to develop and implement a detailed track maintenance and inspection plan. It also will develop and implement a program to train employees on how to make inspections for compliance with the federal track safety regulations and ensure they are fully qualified to assess the railroad's compliance.

Source: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/fra3105.htm>

10. *December 12, Department of Transportation* — U.S., Mexican aviation agreement signed.

Travel from the United States to many popular Mexican tourist destinations will become easier due to a new aviation agreement signed on Monday, December 12, by the United States and Mexico, said Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta. Under the new agreement, which was concluded on September 21 in Washington, DC, three airlines from each country will now be able to fly between any U.S. city and 14 popular Mexican destinations: Acapulco, Cancun, Cozumel, Guadalajara, Huatulco, Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo, Loreto, Manzanillo, Mazatlan, Merida, Monterrey, Oaxaca, Puerto Vallarta and San Jose del Cabo. Previously, only two airlines from each country could operate between each U.S. city and those 14 cities in Mexico. Mineta said the agreement includes good news for air cargo carriers in both countries. The new agreement, for example, allows an unlimited number of scheduled all-cargo carriers to fly between the U.S. and Mexico. Under the old agreement, only five cargo carriers from Mexico and five from the U.S. could operate scheduled service to the other country.

Source: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/dot17805.htm>

11. *December 12, USA TODAY* — Southwest's "goodwill" should keep fliers. Thursday,

December 8's crash landing of a Southwest Airlines jet at Chicago's Midway Airport is testing the maverick carrier's unorthodox corporate persona and its reputation. When Southwest Flight 1248 skidded off the end of Midway's runway, through a fence and into a highway intersection, Joshua Woods became the first person to die in a Southwest accident since the carrier began flying in 1973. Southwest's "safety record had been a major selling point, a unique proposition," says Jonathan Bernstein, president of Bernstein Crisis Management in Monrovia, CA. But retaining consumers' trust and loyalty after a crash is not automatic, no matter how good the carrier's reputation beforehand, warns Bruce Hicks, a crisis communications consultant from Houston. After a slow start, Southwest's public relations response seemed to hit all the right notes, Bernstein says. Three hours after the crash, CEO Gary Kelly addressed the media at Southwest's Dallas headquarters. At a later news conference, Kelly began by saying, "There are no words to adequately convey our grief and sorrow....The entire Southwest family is grieving this loss."

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/news/2005-12-11-southwest_x.htm

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Postal and Shipping Sector

Nothing to report.

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Agriculture Sector

12. *December 11, Canadian Press* — British Columbia poultry farms declared free of bird flu.

A quarantine on dozens of poultry farms in British Columbia, Canada's Fraser Valley was lifted Saturday, December 10, after they were found free of avian influenza. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency declared chicken and duck farms in two surveillance zones disease-free following 21 days of negative test results. The agency quarantined the farms as a precaution after a low-pathogenic strain of the H5N2 avian flu virus was found at two duck and geese farms in November. Three rounds of weekly testing turned up no spread of the bird flu virus, so health officials say commercial movement can resume at 80 farms. However, the two farms where the disease first turned up remain under quarantine. Over 62,000 ducks and geese were destroyed at the two farms where the virus was discovered.

Source: http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_Type1&c=Article&pubid=968163964505&cid=1134304148087&col=968705899037&call_page=TS_News&call_pageid=968332188492&call_pagepath=News/News

13. *December 09, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish* — New Mexico confirms two cases of chronic wasting disease in elk. Two elk killed in the southern Sacramento Mountains of southeast New Mexico have tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD), the Department of Game and Fish announced Friday, December 9. The animals were the first elk in New Mexico to test positive for CWD since the disease was first discovered in mule deer in 2002. Both CWD-afflicted elk were killed in an area 10 to 15 miles southeast of Cloudcroft in Game Management Unit 34, the same general area where the state's most recent case of CWD was detected in a mule deer. One of the elk — a mature male — was taken October 3 by a hunter and showed no symptoms of the disease. The other elk — a yearling female — was in very poor condition and unable to stand when a Department of Game and Fish conservation officer found it October 1. Testing and verification of the samples required about two months. CWD is a fatal neurological illness that afflicts deer, elk, and moose. The origin of CWD in New Mexico is unknown. It has been found in 12 wild deer and two wild elk since 2002, when the disease was first discovered east of Las Cruces.

CWD information: <http://www.cwd-info.org>

Source: <http://www.freewmexican.com/news/36179.html>

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Food Sector

14. *December 12, Associated Press* — Japan agrees to ease ban on U.S. beef. The easing Monday, December 12, of Japan's two-year ban on U.S. and Canadian beef imports could put American steaks back on Japanese plates by year's end, but lingering worries persist on both sides of the Pacific. Japanese consumers are leery as ever about mad cow disease, while North American ranchers bemoan the limited trade opening as only a first step toward tapping what was once their most lucrative overseas market. Trade will resume with a host of new rules for North American beef. Japan will only import meat from cows younger than 21 months. U.S. inspectors must follow strict guidelines, such as removing dangerous cow material such as

brains and spinal cords. Japan will dispatch inspection teams to review North American exporting facilities starting Tuesday, December 13. Before the ban, Japan had purchased more American beef than any other country in the world, buying \$1.4 billion worth in 2003. Japan estimates that under the new guidelines, some five million American cows could prove eligible for export. But a survey by Kyodo News showed some 75 percent of Japanese are unwilling to eat U.S. beef because of mad cow fears, compared to 21 percent who said they would consume it.

Source: http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/wire/ats-ap_health14dec12.1.459116.story?coll=sns-ap-tophealth&ctrack=1&cset=true

15. *December 12, U.S. Department of Agriculture* — **Regulations governing the importation of whole cuts of boneless beef from Japan amended.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Monday, December 12, announced that it is amending regulations governing the importation of meat and other edible animal products to re-establish, under certain conditions, the importation of whole cuts of boneless beef from Japan. This final rule will continue to safeguard the U.S. against the introduction of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). In September 2001, APHIS prohibited the importation of ruminants and most ruminant products from Japan following the confirmation of BSE in a native-born cow in that country. Recently, Japan requested that APHIS consider resuming the importation of beef from Japan to the U.S. Research has demonstrated that only a limited number of tissues from cattle may harbor infectious levels of BSE. These are primarily the central nervous system tissues, such as the brain and spinal cord. Requirements for the removal of these tissues, commonly referred to as SRMs, would prevent them from entering the human food supply and are an important safeguard to protect public health. Research has not demonstrated that bovine muscle meat, which would be the sole product eligible for importation under the final rule, harbors BSE.

Source: http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentonly=true&contentid=2005/12/0546.xml

16. *December 12, Agricultural Research Service* — **Pathogen studies could result in safer produce.** Because conventional washing methods to remove microbial contaminants from fresh fruit and vegetable produce surfaces have been found to be only marginally effective, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists want to give the produce packing and processing industries better techniques. ARS researchers are developing new technologies to remove or inactivate pathogens on both fresh and minimally processed produce. Bacteria can quickly attach to the produce surfaces and form what are called biofilms that likely improve their ability to colonize and survive. A biofilm is a mass of microbes attached to a surface and to each other by bacterial polymers (complex sugars). This polymer coating may protect bacterial cells from exposure to antimicrobial compounds used to sanitize produce. The pathogen *Salmonella* is often responsible for produce-related outbreaks of foodborne illness. The ARS researchers recently gained new insight into biofilm formation by *Salmonella* on various surfaces. The ability of *Salmonella* cells to form biofilm on plastic or stainless steel surfaces was dependent on the production of fimbriae (hairlike structures) and cellulose that help the cells attach to and colonize surfaces. This new knowledge helps explain how *Salmonella* survives harsh sanitizing environments.

Source: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/News/docs.htm?docid=1261>

17. *December 12, United Press International* — **U.S. in dilemma over poultry vaccine.** The U.S. is stockpiling poultry vaccine to fight a possible bird flu outbreak, but is reluctant to use it for fear of hurting exports. Scientists say the best way to prevent a human pandemic of avian influenza is to stop the H5N1 virus while it is still mostly a problem in birds, the Wall Street Journal reported. But poultry-industry executives say importing countries would likely close their borders to chickens from states where poultry had been vaccinated. That's because the screening tests many importing countries use for bird flu can't tell whether chickens have been treated with a vaccine or infected with the disease itself. The U.S. exports about 15 percent of its chicken meat annually, with \$2.2 billion in shipments last year, the Journal said.
Source: <http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/view.php?StoryID=20051212-094805-4352r>
18. *December 10, Food Safety and Inspection Service* — **Expanded lunchmeat product recall.** ConAgra Foods, a Marshall, MO, firm, is voluntarily expanding its December 1 recall of approximately 9,550 pounds of various bologna, ham, and turkey lunch meal products to a total of 2.8 million pounds due to possible contamination after cheese provided by its supplier tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced Saturday, December 10. The ham, bologna, turkey, and chicken lunch meal products were produced on various dates between October 13 and December 3 and were distributed to retail establishments nationwide. The problem was discovered through the company's internal investigation to identify the root cause of the December 1 voluntary recall. FSIS has received no reports of illnesses associated with consumption of these products. Consumption of food contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* can cause listeriosis, an uncommon but potentially fatal disease.
Source: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_052_2005_Expanded/index.asp
19. *December 09, U.S. Food and Drug Administration* — **Tests show hurricanes did not contaminate Gulf Coast seafood.** The states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, along with U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have analyzed hundreds of samples of fish and shellfish from the waters affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To date, the data show no reason for concern about consuming seafood from the Gulf region due to the hurricanes. The samples were analyzed for chemical and microbiological contaminants that could have been introduced by the hurricanes. The extensive seafood tissue sampling occurred in an area from the estuaries of New Orleans, LA, to Gulf Shores, AL. The sampled areas included Lake Pontchartrain, Mississippi Sound, Mobile Bay as well as the offshore areas of the northern Gulf of Mexico. Current data from analyses of fish and other shellfish from these areas show no reason for concern.
Source: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2005/NEW01271.html>

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Water Sector

20. *December 12, Boston Globe (MA)* — **High uranium levels found in condos' drinking water.** Tests on the drinking-water supply at the 72-unit Candlewood Lake Condominiums in New Milford, CT, have shown the radioactive element uranium is present at double the concentration the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers acceptable. The residents are being

encouraged to use bottled water for drinking and cooking. But since uranium isn't absorbed through the skin, doing laundry or washing with the water shouldn't be an issue. The EPA began requiring water companies to test drinking water for uranium and other radionuclides only last year, and the elevated levels at the wells serving the Candlewood condos was only discovered four months ago. Uranium can show up naturally in water and doesn't necessarily create a danger; most that enters the body is eliminated through natural processes. But a small amount is absorbed and carried to the kidneys, where it can cause damage and increase the risk of cancer.

Source: http://www.boston.com/news/local/connecticut/articles/2005/12/12/high_uranium_levels_found_in_condos_drinking_water/

21. *December 12, Arizona Republic* — **Shrinking water supply spurs states' creativity.** The seven Colorado River states are looking beyond traditional approaches as they try to stretch ever further a water supply weakened by population growth and persistent drought. The states want to avoid a bruising legal battle over what happens if the river can't meet demands in future years, which is why new approaches will be on the table this week at the annual gathering of the Colorado River Water Users Association in Las Vegas, NV. At stake is the West's future: The Colorado provides water and power for more than 25 million people, including major cities in Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, and California. Representatives of the seven states — Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and California — outlined proposals for dealing with or averting shortages. The states want to study cloud seeding, water desalination, groundwater mining, and water importation. The states want to look at eradicating tamarisk plants, which use huge amounts of water, at creating more storage at the river's end, and at helping water users waste less. The states are also discussing how to declare shortages, how that would affect operations at the two biggest reservoirs, and who would be responsible for ensuring that Mexico gets its share.

Source: http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/1212c_oloriver-augment.html

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Public Health Sector

22. *December 12, Agence France–Presse* — **More cases of bird flu confirmed in Romania.** Two new villages with cases of bird flu were confirmed in Romania. The villages are in the district of Buzau in eastern Romania where several animals were found dead over the past few days. "Results of tests on the dead animals confirm the presence of H5 virus in Padina et Braiesti," two villages in Buzau, veterinary official Gabriel Predoi told Agence France–Presse on Monday, December 13. Predoi did not say how many cases of bird flu there were. The villages have been quarantined and authorities have ordered hundreds of animals to be slaughtered. After more than a dozen outbreaks, Romanian veterinary officials expect more cases of avian influenza to emerge with the arrival of waves of migrating wild birds.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20051212/hl_afp/healthfluromania_051212112513

23. *December 12, Reuters* — **Southeast Asian nations to create bird flu drug stockpile.** Southeast Asian nations agreed on Monday, December 13, to create a stockpile of antiviral drugs to combat the deadly spread of bird flu throughout the region. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also pledged to work more closely on tackling cross-border

threats like bird flu by developing a regional approach and sharing resources. Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said that the stockpile would be available to any ASEAN country that might need it. While the bird flu virus remains relatively hard for people to catch and is spread almost exclusively through human contact with birds, health officials fear it could mutate into a virus that could pass from person to person and set off a global pandemic. The H5N1 strain of bird flu virus has killed 70 people in Asia since it swept through large parts of the region in late 2003.

Source: <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/SYD238406.htm>

24. *December 08, National Center for Policy Analysis* — Uncontrolled infections leave U.S.

hospitals unprepared for disease outbreaks and bioterrorism. If avian flu arrives in the U.S. and changes genetically into a disease that spreads rapidly from person to person, the death toll would depend largely on what hospitals do when the first victims come in for treatment, according to a study by the Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths (RID). If hospitals have effective infection control measures in place, they will prevent avian flu from spreading to other patients who did not come in with it. If not, bird flu would race through hospitals, infecting patients and staff. “Shoddy infection control is poor preparation for flu and poor homeland security as well,” cautioned Betsy McCaughey, RID Chairman and former Lieutenant Governor of New York. The report, co-sponsored by the National Center for Policy Analysis highlights the grave consequences of poor infection control in most American hospitals. “One out of every 20 patients gets an infection in the hospital,” McCaughey said. “Infections that have been nearly eradicated in some countries — such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) — are raging through hospitals in the U.S.” “How can hospitals that lack the discipline to stop infections spread by touch cope with deadly pathogens that travel invisibly through the air, such as a bioterrorist pathogen like smallpox,” McCaughey added.

Report: http://www.ncpa.org/pub/special/pdf/RIDBooklet_120605.pdf

Source: <http://www.ncpa.org/prs/rel/2005/20051208nr.html>

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Government Sector

25. *December 12, Federal Computer Weekly* — Federal agencies to use faster, safer fingerprint

standard. Biometric manufacturers and most federal agencies could get help this holiday season: the fingerprint storage standard they want for the federal government's new Personal Identity Verification (PIV) cards. By the end of December, the government is expected to announce that the cards must use a mathematical, minutiae-based template of fingerprint images of cardholders' two index fingers instead of compressed images of the prints themselves, said Kevin Crouch, portfolio manager for Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (HSPD-12) implementation at the Department of Homeland Security's Joint Office of Identification and Credentialing. Vendors are excited because the standard would allow faster authentication with less data and more privacy. The switch breaks a nearly yearlong deadlock over whether the PIV cards should use images or templates, said Walter Hamilton, chair of the International Biometric Industry Association.

Source: <http://www.fcw.com/article91699-12-12-05-Print>

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Emergency Services Sector

26. *December 11, Associated Press* — **Coastal California is not prepared for tsunami, study says.** Tsunami waves generated by a large offshore earthquake would threaten at least one million coastal residents in California and inundate the nation's largest port complex, according to a new report. The bleak study, released Sunday, December 11, found gaps in the state's readiness to handle a tsunami, including flaws in the existing warning system, a lack of evacuation plans by coastal communities and building codes that don't take into account tsunami-strength surges. "I don't think we're ready yet, but we're getting there," said Richard McCarthy, executive director of the California Seismic Safety Commission, which issued the report. The commission, an independent advisory panel, formed a special committee to look at the dangers after last December's deadly tsunami in Southeast Asia. About a million people live in low-lying coastal areas that are vulnerable to flooding by a tsunami. Existing building codes call for structures to be able to withstand severe shaking from an earthquake, but the report revealed that homes and businesses are rarely designed to hold up against tsunami-force surges. The report also found that most coastal communities lacked evacuation plans for residents.

Source: <http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/nation/3517941.html>

27. *December 11, Detroit New (MI)* — **Terror drill in Michigan reveals flaws.** Poor communication was the biggest problem that arose during a mock terror attack conducted at five Macomb County, MI, high schools this fall, according to a new report released last week. Emergency and law enforcement personnel from around the county took part in a drill September 22. Of particular concern was a breakdown in communication between responders. At one point, the report describes communication among fire, police and emergency medical services as "impossible." "Radio communications were poor due to inadequate school building coverage and the fact that various departments and agencies are on different frequencies," the report reads. Lou Mioduszewski, Macomb County's director of emergency management and communications, said the frequency problems will be corrected once the county and all of its municipalities are tied into the state's upgraded 800 MHz communication system. Other issues raised in the report include: Unfamiliarity with the schools kept emergency personnel from taking advantage of assets such as in-school surveillance cameras; the county's emergency operations center in the Macomb County Jail in Mount Clemens needs "more phones, better fax machines, printers, status boards, copy machine, computers," and was described as "deficient in proper work space and tools."

Source: <http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20051211/METRO03/512110398/1003/METRO>

28. *December 09, New York Daily News* — **New York county tests agencies' communication and response during flu drill.** In a three-day scenario that ended Friday, December 9, Suffolk County, NY, officials simulated a flu pandemic in an effort to check the heartiness of the county's flu-outbreak response capability. During the mock outbreak, the county assessed everything from how information will get from agency to agency in an emergency to how quickly citizens can get flu shots. "As we saw with Hurricane Katrina over the summer, in a real scenario, the local responders are going to be the very first ones called to action," said county spokesperson Mark Smith. The drill's objective was to test the county's communications

systems and its ability to coordinate between various county agencies, including the health department, police, local government and private health care providers. Also under scrutiny in the comprehensive drill was how efficiently the county would be able to disseminate information and distribute medical supplies and vaccinations in the event of a flu pandemic. While the drill deals specifically with the possibility of a flu outbreak, Smith said the county "could use the lessons learned here for any other biological or chemical disaster or some other illness that we haven't really explored yet."

Source: <http://www.nydailynews.com/boroughs/story/373192p-317279c.html>

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Information Technology and Telecommunications Sector

29. *December 12, ZDNET (United Kingdom)* — Preparation systems administrators can mitigate the effects of the upcoming Sober worm attack, say experts. Security administrators need not worry about the effects of the predicted Sober attack on January 5, as long as they take precautions and strip infections from their systems, security experts said on Friday, December 9. The impact of the upcoming attack can be mitigated by rooting out the problem at source, according to McAfee. Because a machine needs to be already infected with a variant of the virus for the update to take effect, machines can be prevented from downloading the updated virus by having the current version removed before January 5. "The effects can be mitigated by updating antivirus software, and scanning for normal versions of the variant," said Greg Day, security analyst at McAfee. McAfee said that administrators had a relatively large time frame in which to scan machines. However, McAfee warned that systems professionals should not underestimate the scale of the problem, and should be aware of the potential strain on their mail servers when the virus update is released.

Source: <http://news.zdnet.co.uk/internet/security/0.39020375.3924143.7.00.htm>

30. *December 11, New York Times* — China overtakes U.S. as supplier of information technology goods. After almost a decade of explosive growth in its electronics sector, China has overtaken the U.S. as the world's biggest supplier of information technology goods, according to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Data in the report, published on Monday, December 12, show that China's exports of information and communication technology increased by more than 46 percent to \$180 billion in 2004 from a year earlier, easily outstripping for the first time U.S. exports of \$149 billion, which grew 12 percent from 2003. The figures compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, based in Paris, also reveal that China has come close to matching the U.S. in the overall value of its trade in information and communications technology products. The value of China's combined exports and imports of such goods soared to \$329 billion in 2004 from \$35 billion in 1996. Over the same period, the value of American information technology trade expanded at a slower rate, to \$375 billion from \$230 billion.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's data:

http://www.oecd.org/document/8/0,2340,en_2649_201185_3583309_6_1_1_1,00.html

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/11/business/worldbusiness/11cnd-hitech.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1134398046-RvJh6wxlZ7Zf7UdIW s/ljg>

December 11, Associated Press — **Arizona city to become the first of its size with Wi-Fi throughout.** Tempe, AZ, is due to have wireless Internet available for all of its 160,000 residents in February, becoming the first city of its size in the U.S. to have Wi-Fi throughout. Tempe officials hope that by making high-speed Internet as accessible as water or electricity across its 40 square miles, it will attract more technology and biotechnology companies — and the young, upwardly mobile employees they bring. An increasing number of the nation's cities are looking at using Internet access as an economic development tool. Few cities have gotten as far as installing systems, "but most cities are realizing that it may be something that they want to do," said Cheryl Leanza, legislative counsel for the National League of Cities. Philadelphia, PA, is also developing a citywide high-speed system. Unlike Philadelphia or Tempe, New Orleans is building a free system, though the network speed will be limited. Despite these efforts, at least 14 states have passed laws limiting municipal Internet service, and other states are expected to consider similar limits, Leanza said. Arizona does not have such a law.

Source: http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20051212/ap_on_hi_te/wireless_city;_ylt=AhpXyPA0YIJSgBRmQzmTyjEjtBAF;_ylu=X3oDMTA5aHJvMDdwBHNlYwN5bmNhdA--

32. *December 09, CNET News* — **Antivirus companies: Sober code cracked.** The latest variant of the Sober worm caused havoc in November by duping users into executing it by masking itself as e-mails from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency. Antivirus companies were aware that the worm somehow knew how to update itself via the Web. The worm's author programmed this functionality to control infected machines and, if required, change their behavior. On Thursday, December 8, Finnish antivirus firm F-Secure revealed that it had cracked the algorithm used by the worm and could now calculate the exact URLs the worm would check on a particular day. Mikko Hypponen, chief research officer at F-Secure, explained that the virus' author has not used a constant URL because authorities would easily be able to block it. "Sober has been using an algorithm to create pseudorandom URLs which will change based on dates. Ninety-nine percent of the URLs simply don't exist...However, the virus' author can pre-calculate the URL for any date, and when he wants to run something on all the infected machines, he just registers the right URL, uploads his program and BANG! It's run globally on hundreds of thousands of machines," Hypponen wrote in his blog.

Source: http://news.com.com/Sober+code+cracked/2100-7349_3-5989094.html?tag=nl

Internet Alert Dashboard

DHS/US-CERT Watch Synopsis

Over the preceding 24 hours, there has been no cyber activity which constitutes an unusual and significant threat to Homeland Security, National Security, the Internet, or the Nation's critical infrastructures.

US-CERT Operations Center Synopsis: US-CERT is aware of a cross-domain violation in Internet Explorer. This may allow a script in one domain to access web content in a different domain. Web browsers should adhere to the "Same Origin Policy", which prevents documents or scripts loaded from one origin from getting or setting properties of a document from a different origin. Internet Explorer does not

follow this policy when importing CSS documents. For more information please see URL: <http://www.mozilla.org/projects/security/components/same-origin.html>

If the cross-domain violation in Internet Explorer occurs on a system that has Google Desktop Search (GDS) installed, then an attacker may be able to search for private data, execute programs, or execute arbitrary code on this vulnerable system. Google has modified its web pages to prevent exploitation of GDS through this particular vulnerability in Internet Explorer. The cross-domain violation vulnerability in Internet Explorer is still present, however. Although there is limited information concerning this vulnerability, US-CERT encourages users to disable Active scripting to prevent exploitation.

For more information please review URL:

http://www.cert.org/tech_tips/malicious_code_FAQ.html#ie566

Users can also refer to the Microsoft Security Response Center Blog for some additional information on this vulnerability affecting Internet Explorer. For more information please see:

<http://blogs.technet.com/msrc/archive/2005/12/07/415740.aspx>

Automatic Update Functionality in Sober.X Worm US-CERT is aware of functionality that could allow the mass-mailing worm known as "W32/Sober.X" to automatically update itself. W32/Sober.X is a bi-lingual (English and German) mass-mailing worm that utilizes its own SMTP engine to propagate. The W32/Sober.X worm began propagating on November 15, 2005 and will attempt to update itself on or around January 5, 2006. Systems that have already been compromised by the W32/Sober.X worm are expected to receive this update. Once the update is received, the W32/Sober.X worm may execute code that reduces the security protection of vulnerable systems. US-CERT strongly recommends that users and administrators implement the following general protection measures:

Install anti-virus software, and keep its virus signature files up to date.

Do not follow unsolicited web links or execute attachments received in email messages, even if sent by a known and trusted source.

Keep up to date on patches and fixes for your operating system.

For more information please review the US-CERT Computer Virus Resources at URL: http://www.us-cert.gov/other_sources/viruses.html

US-CERT has observed increased traffic affecting port 53 since the release of W32.Spybot.ABDO. Symantec's write-up points out that Spybot.ABDO opens a back door by connecting to an IRC server through TCP port 53. Looking at the Port 53 Report using DShield data, shows that the number of targets has more than doubled in the past 48 hours.

Something to keep in mind is that this time there may be several unscrupulous

activities using 53. Other malware that has been discovered in recent months, using Port 53, include Backdoor, Civcat, Trojan, Esteems.C, Trojan, Esteems, and W32.Beagle.BH@mm. <http://isc.sans.org/diary.php?storyid=928>

Current Port Attacks

Top 10 Target Ports	1026 (win-rpc), 6881 (bittorrent), 445 (microsoft-ds), 80 (www), 4142 (oidocsvc), 27015 (halflife), 25 (smtp), 135 (epmap), 13503 (---), 6348 (---)
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Source: <http://isc.incidents.org/top10.html>; Internet Storm Center

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Website: www.us-cert.gov.

Information on IT information sharing and analysis can be found at the IT ISAC (Information Sharing and Analysis Center) Website: <https://www.it-isac.org/>.

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Commercial Facilities/Real Estate, Monument & Icons Sector

33. *December 12, Macomb Daily (MI)* — Michigan middle school on high alert. Police used an explosives-tracking canine team to search a Clinton Township, MI, middle school on Monday, December 12, after someone made a bomb threat in an Internet chat room over the weekend, according to school and law enforcement officials. The threat was reported to police by parents and students who became aware of it in an Internet chat room over the weekend. It was made by someone with the screen name of XXchemicalZXX. According to people who have read the transcript, it read, "I'm going to bomb Wyandot before Christmas break." The transcript showed the person making the threat didn't want to harm certain students at the school and therefore was warning them not to attend classes. The incident is similar to the case of former Chippewa Valley, MI, High School student Andrew Osantowski who gained national attention when he and his father were arrested in 2004 and charged with plotting an attack on the school. The younger Osantowski mentioned in a chat room that he had plans to kill a police officer, his family, and others at the school in a Columbine-style attack. Police raided his house and uncovered a cache of weapons.

Source: http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/121205/loc_bomb001.shtml

34. *December 11, Auburn Journal (CA)* — Morning of bomb scares shakes California town. A suspicious leather briefcase left at the Kmart in Auburn, CA, prompted Placer County sheriff's deputies to evacuate the store Friday morning, December 9, while seemingly unrelated bomb threats were phoned in to county administrative offices. The briefcase at Kmart turned out to be empty. Bomb threats were also phoned into the county administrative offices. At 9 a.m. PST, a woman called the offices and threatened to blow up the jail courtroom. At 10:30 a.m. PST, a man dressed in a suit was seen nervously pacing inside the Kmart store with the black suitcase, said Placer County Sheriff's Department spokesperson Dena Erwin. "He went to the electronics counter, put it on the counter, and told the employee, 'Hold this for an hour. I'll be back,'" she said. At 11:30 a.m. PST, a woman again called the Placer County offices and repeated the threat to blow up the court building because her brother was recently sentenced to state prison. Erwin was not aware of any connection between the suitcase and the two threats. The bomb scares follow a string of failed bombings in Auburn earlier this year at the Placer County Courthouse and the Department of Motor Vehicles office.

Source: http://www.auburnjournal.com/articles/2005/12/11/news/top_stories/04scares.txt

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General Sector

35. *December 12, Associated Press* — Immigration hits five-year high, report says.

Immigration — both legal and illegal — continues to boom as Congress grapples with how to better control America's borders. A new report by the Center for Immigration Studies found that 7.9 million people moved to the United States in the past five years, the highest five-year period of immigration on record. The report, released Monday, December 12, comes as the House prepares to take up a bill to curb illegal immigration by boosting border security and requiring workplace enforcement of immigration laws. There are 35.2 million foreign-born people living in the United States, according to the report, which is based on the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey from March. The report said an estimated nine million to 13 million are here illegally. The report's estimate of the overall number of immigrants living in the United States is consistent with other analyses. But experts warn that it is difficult to accurately measure the number of people entering the country each year.

Report: <http://www.cis.org/articles/2005/back1405.html>

Source: <http://www.fresnobee.com/24hour/nation/story/2971556p-11649797c.html>

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Contact DHS

To report physical infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact the National Infrastructure Coordinating Center at nicc@dhs.gov or (202) 282-9201.

To report cyber infrastructure incidents or to request information, please contact US-CERT at soc@us-cert.gov or visit their Web page at www.us-cert.gov.

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